NOTE XXXIX.

ON TALEGALLUS PYRRHOPIGIUS.

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Two species of Talegallus are generally known to naturalists. One, Talegallus Lathamii inhabiting Australia, is remarkable for its size equalling almost that of the Turkey, for its wattled throat and tolerably long roof-shaped tail. The other, Talegallus Cuvieri, is found in New-Guinea and most of its dependencies, viz: the isles of Mysole, Salawattie, Aru and Iobie.

This latter species, however, has been subdivided, by certain modern naturalists, into several other species. All those birds presenting the same size, the same proportions and the same coloring of plumage, other characters have been sought for in order to corroborate those species. One of these characters is said to be in the coloring of the legs and feet, reddish in Talegallus jobiensis, Meyer, yellow in the specimens of all other countries. The specimens of Iobie, have, moreover, after the statement of Dr. Meyer, the feathers of the crown somewhat larger and more elongated, a phenomen presented also by some specimens of Tinamus major, separated by Cabanis under the name of Trachypelmus subcristatus, a separation which appears rather hazardous. The specimens of the Archipel of Aru and South-Eastern New-Guinea are entitled, in the opinion of Salvadori, to the rank of a different species, designated by him under the name of Talegallus fuscirostris on account of the brownish color of their bill. Our specimens from the Aru islands have like all others the bill yellow, although Mr. von Rosenberg states in his manuscript that the bill of these very same specimens when they were newly killed, was of the same brownish color, shown by young birds and which is gradually fading into yellow. Lastly, I wish to mention that the Talegallus Arfaki of Salvadori is established on a couple of newly-born specimens caught on the Arfak range of mountains.

It is, nevertheless, true, that there exists, in New-Guinea, besides the Talegallus Cuvieri, a species very different from all those mentioned in the foregoing lines. The skin of one single specimen of this apparently undescribed species was recently brought to Europe by one of the Dutch missionaries stationed on the eastern coast of the North-West peninsula of New-Guinea. The large collection from which I selected this skin, containing not only birdskins from the mainland of New-Guinea, but also from some of the islands of the bay of Geelvink, and not being labelled, it will be the task of further investigators to point out the habitat of this bird in a more special way.

Our Talegallus pyrrhopygius, although presenting in general the same coloring of plumage as Talegallus Cuvieri, differs from this species by several so very conspicous characteristics, that its comparative diagnose can be summed up in the following few lines.

Our bird is in all its dimensions somewhat smaller than Talegallus Cuvieri. The bill is shorter, more rapidedly bent downwards and of a brownish gray horn color, and not yellow as it is commonly the case in Talegallus Cuvieri. The legs, feet and claws are throughout of a brown horn color, and show not at all the yellow tint of those parts in the common species. The feathers of the neck and the upper part of the throat are much more developed, and more numerous. There exists, finally, a very striking difference in the coloring of the upper tail coverts and the rump, these parts being in Talegallus Cuvieri of the same tint as the rest of the plumage, whereas these parts, in Talegallus pyrrhopygius, present a fine chestnut color, lively on the upper tail coverts, faint on the rump.

The principal parts of the two species present the following measures. Wing in T. Cuvieri nine inches and ten lines to ten inches four lines; in T. pyrrhopygius eight inches and ten lines (French measure). Tail in T. Cuvieri, five inches ten lines; in T. pyrrhopygius, five inches and five lines. Tarse in T. Cuvieri three inches three lines; in T. pyrrhopygius, three inches. Middle toe in T. Cuvieri twenty three lines, in T. pyrrhopygius, twenty two lines. Hind toe in T. Cuvieri, ten lines; in T. pyrrhopygius nine lines. Length of bill, in T. Cuvieri thirteen to fourteen lines; in T. pyrrhopygius eleven lines.